

Nan of Music Mountain

By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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DEAF SANDUSKY AND LOGAN FIND DEADLY FANGS IN THE TRAP SET FOR DE SPAIN, WHO DISAPPEARS MYSTERIOUSLY FROM CALABASAS

The region around Sleepy Cat, a railroad division town in the Rocky mountain mining country, is infested with stage robbers, cattle rustlers and gunmen. The worst of these belong to the Morgan gang, whose hang-out is Morgan Gap, a fertile valley about 20 miles from Sleepy Cat, and near Calabasas, a point where the horses are changed on the stage line from the Thief River mines to the railroad. Jeffries, superintendent of the mountain division, appoints Henry De Spain general manager of the stage line, with John LeFevre and Bob Scott, an Indian, as his assistants, and gives orders to break up the gang. The chief had men are Sassoon, Deaf Sandusky, Harvey Logan and Gale Morgan. De Spain foolishly becomes smitten with pretty Nan Morgan, Gale's cousin, but she ignores his advances. The gang traps De Spain alone in a saloon, and when this installment opens a gun fight is imminent.

CHAPTER IX—Continued.

Still regarding De Spain with the most businesslike expression, the grizzled outlaw took a guarded step forward, his companions following suit. De Spain, always with a jealous regard for the relative distance between him and his self-appointed executioners, moved backward. In crossing the room, Sandusky, without objection from his companions, moved across their front, and when the four lined up at the bar, their positions had changed. De Spain stood at the extreme left, Sandusky next, Logan beside him, and Gale Morgan, at the other end of the line, pretended to pound the bar for service. De Spain, following mountain etiquette in the circumstances, spread his open hands, palms down, on the bar. Sandusky's great palms slid in the same fashion over the checked slab in unspoken recognition of the brief armistice. Logan's hands came up in turn, and Morgan still pounded for someone to serve.

De Spain in the new disposition weighed his chances as being both better and worse. They had put Sandusky's first shot at no more than an arm's length from his prey, with Logan next, to cover the possibility of the big fellow's failing to paralyze De Spain the first instant. On the other hand, De Spain, trained in the tactics of Whispering Smith and Medicine Bend gunmen, welcomed a short-arm struggle with the worst of his assailants closest at hand. Their maneuvering caused no disquiet to their slender, compactly built victim. "You'll wait a long time, if you wait for service here, Morgan," he said, commenting with composure on Morgan's impatience. Logan looked again at his two companions and laughed.

Every hope De Spain had of possible help from the back room died with that laugh. Then the door behind the bar slowly opened, and the scar-faced face of Sassoon peered cautiously from the gloom. The horsefaced, stooping, walked in with a leer directed triumphantly at the railroad man.

If it were possible to deepen it, the sinister spot on De Spain's face darkened. Something in his blood raged at the sight of the malevolent face. He glanced at Logan. "This," he smiled faintly, nodding toward Sassoon as he himself took a short step farther to the left, "is your drink, Harvey, is it?"

"No," retorted Logan loudly, "this is your drink."

"I'll take Sassoon," assented De Spain, good-natured again and shifting still another step to the left. "What do you fellows want now?"

"We want to punch a hole through that strawberry," said Logan, "that beauty-mark. Where did you get it, De Spain?"

"I might as well ask where you get your gall, Harvey," returned De Spain, watching Logan hunch Sandusky toward the left that both might crowd him closer. "I was born with my beauty-mark—just as you were born with your d—d—bad manners," he added composedly, for in hugging up to him his enemies were playing his game. "You can't help it, neither can I," he went on. "Somebody is bound to pay for putting that mark on me. Somebody is bound to pay for your manners. Why talk about either? Sassoon, set out for your friends—or I will. Spread, gentlemen, spread."

He had reached the position on which he believed his life depended, and stood so close to the end of the



The Scar-Faced Face of Sassoon Peered Cautiously From the Door.

bar that with a single step, as he uttered the last words, he turned it. Sandusky pushed close next him. De Spain continued to speak without hesitation or break, but the words seemed to have no place in his mind. He was thinking only, and saw only within his mind a cut-glass button that lay at the bottom of Sandusky's

"You've waited one day too long to collect for your strawberry, De Spain," cried Logan shrilly. "You've turned one trick too many on the sinks, young fellow. If the man that put your mark on you ain't in this room, you'll never get him."

"Which means, I take it, you're going to try to get me," smiled De Spain. "No," bellowed Morgan. "It means we have got you."

"You are fooling yourself, Harvey," De Spain addressed the warning to Logan. "And you, too, Sandusky," he added.

"We'll take care of that," grinned Logan. Sandusky kept silence.

"You are jumping into another man's fight," protested De Spain steadily. "Sassoon's fight is our fight," interrupted Morgan.

"I advise you," said De Spain once more, looking with the words at Sandusky and his crouching, "to keep out of it."

"Sandusky," yelled Logan to his partner, "he advises me and you to keep out of this fight," he shrilly laughed.

"Sure," assented Sandusky, but with no variation in tone and his eyes on De Spain.

Logan, with an oath, leaned over the bar toward Sassoon, and pointed contemptuously toward the end of the bar. "Shike!" he cried, "step through the rail and take that man's gun."

De Spain, looking from one to the other of the four faces confronting him, laughed for the first time. But he was looking without seeing what he seemed to look at. In reality, he saw only a cut-glass button. He was face to face with taking a man's life or surrendering his own, and he knew the life must be taken in such a way as instantly to disable its possessor.

These men had chosen their time and place. There was nothing for it but to meet them. Sassoon was stepping toward him, though very doubtfully. De Spain laughed again, dryly this time. "Go slow, Sassoon," he said. "That gun is loaded."

"If you want terms, hand over your gun to Sassoon," cried Logan.

"Not till it's empty," returned De Spain. "Do you want to try taking it?" he demanded of Logan, his cheeks burning a little darker.

Logan never answered the question. It was not meant to be answered. For De Spain asked it only to cover the spring he made at that instant into Sandusky's middle. Catlike though it was, the feat did not take the big fellow unprepared. He had heard once, when or where he could not tell, but he had never forgotten the hint, that De Spain, a boxer, was as quick with his feet as with his hands. The outlaw whirled. Both men shot from the hip; the reports cracked together. One bullet, grazing the fancy button, smashed through the ruddy waistcoat; the other, as De Spain's free hand struck at the muzzle of the big man's gun, tore into De Spain's foot. Sandusky, convulsed by the frightful shock, staggered against De Spain's arm, the latter dancing tight against him. Logan, alive to the trick but caught behind his partner, fired over Sandusky's right shoulder at De Spain's head, flattened sideways against the gasping outlaw's breast. Hugging his shield, De Spain threw his second shot over Sandusky's left shoulder into Logan's face. Logan, striking to the floor, never moved again. Supporting with extraordinary strength the unwieldy bulk of the dying butcher, De Spain managed to steady him as a buffer against Morgan's fire until he could send a slug over Sandusky's head at the instant the latter collapsed. Morgan fell against the bar.

Sandusky's weight dragged De Spain down. For an instant the four men sprawled in a heap. Sassoon, who had not yet got an effective shot across at his agile enemy, dropping his revolver, dodged under the rail to close. De Spain, struggling to free himself from the dying man, saw, through a mist, the greenish eyes and the thirsty knife, the ash-colored face of the enemy, and De Spain, partly caught under Sandusky's body, thought, as Sassoon came on, the game was up. With an effort born of desperation, he dragged himself from under the twitching giant, freed his revolver, rolled away, and with his right arm swinging, swung the gun at Sassoon's stomach. He meant to kill him. The bullet whirled the white-faced man to one side and he dropped, but pulled himself, full of fight, to his knees and, knife in hand, panted forward. De Spain, rolling hastily from him, staggered to his feet, and, running in as Sassoon tried to strike, beat him senseless with the butt of his gun.

His own eyes were streaming blood. His head was reeling and he was breathless, but he remembered those of the gang waiting outside. He still could see dimly the window at the end of the bar. Dashing his fingers through the red stream on his forehead, he ran for the window, smashed through the glass into the patio and found Sassoon's horse trembling at the stables. Catching the lines and the

pommel, he stuck his foot up again and again for the stirrup. It was useless; he could not make it. Then, summoning all of his fast-ebbing strength, he threw himself like a sack across the horse's back, lashed the brute through the open gateway, climbed into the saddle, and spurred blindly away.

CHAPTER X.

After the Storm.

For a week the search continued day and night, but each day, even each succeeding hour, reduced the expectation of ever seeing De Spain alive. Spies working at Calabasas, others sent in by Jeffries to Music Mountain among the Morgans, and men from Medicine Bend hunting Sleepy Cat could get no word of De Spain. Deaf Sandusky and Logan had been found dead at the Inn by LeFevre on the night after the fight. Fairly accurate reports accounted for Gale Morgan, nursing a wound at home, and for Sassoon, badly wounded and under cover somewhere in the gap. Beyond this, information halted.

Toward the end of the week a Mexican shepherd brought word in to LeFevre that he had seen in Duke Morgan's stable Sassoon's horse—the one on which De Spain had escaped. He averred he had seen the blood-stained Santa Fe saddle that had been taken off the horse when the horse was found at daybreak of the day following the fight, waiting at Sassoon's corral to be cured for. There could be, it was fairly well ascertained, no mistake about the horse—the man knew the animal; but his information threw no light on the fate of its missing rider.

Though Scott had known first of De Spain's helpless condition in his desperate flight, as regarded self-defense, the Indian was the last to abandon hope of seeing him alive again. One night, in the midst of a gloomy council at Jeffries' office, he was pressed for an explanation of his confidence. It was always difficult for Scott to explain his reasons for thinking anything. Men with the surest instinct are usually poorest at reasoning a conviction out. But Bob, cross-examined and harried, managed to give some explanation of the faith that was in him. "In the first place," he said, "I've ridden a good deal with that man—pretty much all over the country north of Medicine Bend. He is as full of tricks as a nut's full of meat. Henry De Spain can hide out like an Indian, and doctor himself. Then, again, I know something about the way he fights; up here they don't. If those four fellows had ever seen him in action, they never would have expected to get out of a room alive, after a showdown with Henry De Spain. As near as I can make out from all the talk that's floating around, what fooled them was seeing him shoot at a mark here one day in Sleepy Cat."

Jeffries didn't interrupt, but he slapped his knee sharply.

"You might just as well try to stand on a box of dynamite, and shoot into it, and expect to live to tell it," continued Scott mildly, "as to shoot into that fellow in a room with closed doors and expect to get away with it. The only way the bunch can ever kill that man, without getting killed themselves, is to get him from behind; and at that, John, the man that fires the gun," murmured the scout, "ought to be behind a tree."

"You say he is hit. I grant it," he concluded. "But I knew him once, when he was hit, to lie out in the bush for a week. He got cut off once from Whispering Smith and Kennedy after a scrimmage outside Williams Cache two years ago."

"You don't believe, then, he's dead, Bob?" demanded Jeffries impatiently.

"Not till I see him dead," persisted Scott unmoved.

De Spain, when he climbed into Sassoon's saddle, was losing sight and consciousness. He knew he could no longer defend himself, and was so faint that only the determination of putting distance between him and any pursuers held him to the horse after he spurred away. With the instinct of the hunted, he tumbled with his right hand for his means of defense, and was relieved to find his revolver, after his panicky dash for safety, safe in its place. He put his hand to his belt for fresh cartridges. The belt was gone.

The discovery sent a shock through his failing faculties. He could not recollect why he had no belt. Believing his senses tricked him, he felt again and again for it before he would believe it was not buckled somewhere about him. But it was gone, and he stuck back in his waistband his useless revolver. One hope remained—flight, and he spurred his horse cruelly.

Blood running continually into his eyes from the wound in his head made him think his eyes were gone, and direction was a thing quite beyond his power of compass. He made little effort to guide, and his infuriated horse flew along as if winged.

A warm, sticky feeling in his right boot warned him, when he tried to make some mental inventory of his condition, of at least one other wound. He could not see twenty feet ahead or behind. Even when he hurriedly wiped the cloud from his eyes his vision seemed to have failed, and he could only cling to his horse to put the miles as fast as possible between himself and more of the Morgans.

A perceptible weakness presently forced him to realize he must look to his wounded foot. Before he slackened speed he tried to look behind to reconnoiter. With relief he perceived his sight to be a trifle better, and in scanning the horizon he could discover no pursuers. Choosing a secluded spot, he dismounted, cut open his boot, and found that a bullet, passing downward, had torn an artery under the arch of the foot. Making a rude tourniquet, he succeeded in checking pretty well the spurting flow that was sapping his strength. After he had adjusted the bandage he stood up and looked at it.

Then he drew his revolver again and broke it. He found five empty shells in the chambers and threw them away. The last cartridge had not been fired. He could not even figure out how he had happened to have six cartridges in the cylinder, for he rarely loaded more

than five. Indeed, it was his fixed habit to avoid accidents—never to carry a cartridge under the hammer of his gun—yet now there had been one. Without trying to explain the circumstance, he took fresh stock of his chances and began to wonder whether he might yet escape and live.

He climbed again into the saddle, and, riding to a ridge, looked carefully over the desert. It was with an effort that he could steady himself, and the extent of his weakness, surprised him. What further perplexed him as he crossed a low divide, got another good view and saw no pursuit threatening in any direction, was to identify the country he was in. The only landmark anywhere in sight that he could recognize was Music Mountain. This now lay to the northwest, and he knew he must be a long way from any country he was familiar with. But there was no gainsaying, even in his confused condition, Music Mountain. After looking at it a long time he headed with some hesitation cautiously toward it, with intent to intercept the first trail to the northeast. This would take him toward Sleepy Cat.

As his eyes continued to sweep the horizon he noted that the sun was down and it was growing dark. He was aware at intervals that he was steadying himself like a drunken man. His efforts to guide the horse only bewildered the beast, and the two tumbled on manilla curves and doubled back on their track until De Spain decided that his sole chance of reaching any known trail was to let go and give the horse his head. A period of unconsciousness, a blank in De Spain's mind, soon followed. How long he rode in this way, or how far, he never knew. He was roused to consciousness by the unaccustomed sound of running water underneath his horse's feet.

It was pitch dark everywhere. The horse after the hard experience of the evening was drinking a welcome draft. De Spain had no conception of where he could be, but the stream told him he had somehow reached the range, though Music Mountain itself had been swallowed up in the night. A sudden and uncontrollable thirst seized the wounded man. He could hear the water falling over the stones and climbed slowly and painfully out of the saddle to the ground. With the lines in his left hand he crawled toward the water and, lying flat on the ground beside the horse, put his head down to drink. The horse, meantime, satisfied, lifted his head with a gulp, rinsed his mouth, and pulled backward. The lines slipped from De Spain's hand. Alarmed, the weakened man scrambled after them. The horse, startled, shied, and before his rider could get to his feet scamped off in a trot. While De Spain listened in consternation, the escaped horse, falling into an easy stride, galloped away into the night.

Stunned by this new misfortune, and listening gloomily to the retreating hoof-beats, De Spain pondered the situation in which the disaster left him. It was the worst possible blow that could have fallen, but fallen it had, and he turned with such philosophy as

he could to compare the drink of water that had probably cost him his life. When he had slaked a seemingly unquenchable craving, he dashed the running water, first with one hand and then the other, over his face. He tried feebly to wash away some of the alkali that had crusted over the wound in the front of his head and was stinging and burning in it. There was now nothing to do but to scorch himself until daylight and wait till help should reach him—it was manifestly impossible for him to seek it.

Meanwhile, the little stream beside him offered first aid. He tried it with his foot and found it slight and shallow, albeit with a rocky bed that made wading in his condition difficult. But he felt so much better he was able to attempt this, and, keeping near to one side of the current, he began to follow it slowly up-stream. The ascent was at times precipitous, which pleased him, though it depleted his new strength. It was easy in this way to hide his trail, and the higher and faster the stream took him into the mountains the safer he would be from any Calabasas pursuers. When he had regained a little strength and oriented himself, he could quickly get down into the hills.

Animated by these thoughts, he held his way up-stream, hoping at every step to reach the gorge from which the flow issued. He would have known this by the sound of the falling water, but, weakening soon, he found he must abandon hope of getting up to it. However, by resting and scrambling up the rocks, he kept on longer than he would have believed possible. Encouraged at length, and as he struggled upward, a ledge and a clump of bushes, he crawled weakly on hands and knees into it, too spent to struggle farther, stretched himself on the flattened branches and sank into a heavy sleep.

He woke in broad daylight. Consciousness returned slowly and he raised himself with pain from his rough couch. His wounds were stiff, and he lay for a long time on his back looking up at the sky. At length he dragged himself to an open space near where he had slept and looked about. He appeared to be near the foot of a mountain quite strange to him, and in rather an exposed place. He clambered a hundred feet above where he had slept before he found a hiding place. It was at the foot of a tiny waterfall where the brook, striking a ledge of granite, had patiently hollowed out a shallow pool. Beside this a great mass of frost-bitten rock had fallen, and one of the boulders lay tilted in such a way as to roof in a sort of cave, the entrance to which was not higher than a man's knee. De Spain crawled into this refuge.

And then a very strange thing happens to De Spain—an event that changes the whole course of his life. It is described fully in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

GIFT WAS NOT APPRECIATED

Soldier's Wife Certainly Chose A Most Unfortunate Time To Send Those Fish to the Camp.

"For a long time," said the fat plumber, "I have been trying to locate the most unlucky gink in the whole world."

"And now—"

"I have found him at last." The thin carpenter showed curiosity.

"He is a soldier down on the border," the fat plumber continued.

"Do you mean that you think all of the boys down there are to be pitted?"

"I should say not!"

"Then you have to furnish a diagram with your joke."

"This particular soldier is wealthy and has everything he wants, back home."

"And still he is unlucky."

"Yes. He wrote to his wife, one day, and told her she ought to do something for the boys at the front."

"Yes—"

"And the wife immediately bought 500 fresh fish and had them shipped to the border."

"That was fine of her."

"Now comes the unlucky part."

"I have been waiting for that."

"On the very day that the consignment reached the company the woman's husband happened to be assigned to duty in the mess tent."

"Yes—"

"And blamed if he didn't have to clean every one of those 500 fish."—Youngstown Telegram.

The Skirmisher.

John Blevins was the most bashful lad in a Kansas village. For three years he had been keeping company with Sallie Jaines, but he could not bring his courage up to the popping point. One Sunday night, as John was leaving the front yard of his in-law's, he encountered the old man, who had begun to chafe under the diffidence of his daughter's sweetheart.

"Look-ee here, John," exclaimed paterfamilias, "You have been coming to see my daughter for several years now, and I want to know what your intentions are."

"W-w-well, s-s-sir," stammered John, "I am aiming t-to m-marry her."

"Aiming!" snorted the old man. "Well, don't you think it about time that you freed?"

HAPPENINGS of the week IN MISSOURI

Chillicothe showed her loyalty recently when the city purchased one \$5,000 and five \$1,000 liberty bonds.

Herbert S. Hadley, former governor of Missouri, and for years a prominent figure in national Republican politics, has accepted a professorship in the law school of the University of Colorado at Boulder.

Warren Decker, engineer of St. Louis, was killed; Harry Hawkins of Eldon, fireman, suffered a broken leg, and W. J. Mudgett, conductor of Union was severely injured in a head-on collision near Freeburg, on the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railway.

Word has been received at Nevada of the death of Harvey Wisbell at Gas City, Kan. Mr. Wisbell was an old time Nevada newspaper man and was county clerk of Vernon county from 1902 to 1910.

David R. Francis of St. Louis, American ambassador to Russia, was re-elected president of the board of curators of the University of Missouri at a meeting of the board in Kansas City. C. B. Rollins of Columbia was elected vice-president.

Mrs. A. D. Freeman, one of the oldest residents of Morton, celebrated her 90th birthday a few days ago and on the day of the celebration she had her picture taken standing beneath an elm tree and two sugar maples which she and her husband planted when they first bought the farm on which she now resides, sixty-three years ago. The land, which is now very valuable, was bought in 1851 for \$1.25 an acre.

Robert Skibiel of St. Louis worried that he might be drafted into the army, shot his wife and committed suicide. He left three small children.

By a majority of more than thirteen to one Nevada recently voted bonds for \$30,000 to build a paved road between the city and the government military reservation.

Degrees were conferred upon forty-two candidates at the forty-fourth annual commencement exercises at Drury college recently. The commencement address was delivered by Henry M. Beardsley of Kansas City.

Mrs. J. K. Burnham of Kansas City, widow of the late Kansas City benefactor of Drury college in Springfield, has provided for the establishment and maintenance of a department of domestic science and art in that school.

The Missouri University this year graduated the largest class in the history of the school. The total number of graduates is 600. Of these, forty-five are credited to Kansas City.

The right of witnesses before grand juries to decline to answer questions that might incriminate themselves was sustained by the Springfield court of appeals in ordering the release of Emmett G. Matthews, Woody Woodworth and E. M. James of Howell county, on writs of habeas corpus.

Judge E. P. Dorres of the Howell county circuit court had ordered the men into the custody of the sheriff for refusing to answer a question as to whether they had seen anybody in the county playing cards for money in the last year.

C. I. Taylor of Sedalia was chosen grand counselor of the Missouri chapter of the United Commercial Travelers at the concluding session of their annual convention in Joplin.

Mrs. Adolphus Busch, widow of the well known brewer, has bought half million dollars of the Liberty Loan bonds.

City officials, union leaders and officials of the Springfield Traction Company have agreed upon a settlement of the strike, according to the understanding. No information has been given out.

The Shelby County Red Cross Chapter has been organized at Shelbyville with sixty-two members. A campaign for new members is to be made soon.

Additional reports on the storms that swept Southeastern Missouri and Southern Illinois recently brought the death toll to eighteen. The list of injured totals sixty and a family of seven is reported missing.

James Joseph Butler, twice a member of congress, and the only surviving son of the late Colonel Ed Butler, is dead at St. Louis. The Butlers made and unmade more political leaders in St. Louis than any other man.

Circuit Judge Kirby has denied the application of the Springfield Gas and Electric Company for a restraining order against city officials to prevent the holding of a special election here on June 16 to vote on the proposal to issue \$500,000 in bonds for constructing a municipal lighting plant.

The first rush for the "war bride" degree came the other day when twenty-six marriage licenses were issued by the recorder, breaking all Springfield records. Twenty of the grooms are of registration age.

The record price for contracted hogs was offered and accepted at Fulton when a shipper agreed to pay \$16.60 a hundred for a load of hogs to be delivered the first half of August by J. Ed Moore. This is five cents more than has ever been paid on any central market for hogs.

The corner stone of the new \$15,000 Christian church building at California was laid by R. L. Fulks, a representative of the grand lodge of Masons recently. The Rev. R. E. L. Prunty is pastor of the congregation.

As a Man Thinks.

A young man thinks he is a devil, and an old man likes to think that there was a day when he was a devil.

—American Globe.

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